

12-1163 SCOPING MEETING - GRAND RAPIDS

FEBRUARY 20, 2014 - 6:00 P.M.

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Request of Minnesota Power for a  
Certificate of Need for the Great Northern Transmission  
Line Project

PUC DOCKET NO. E-015/CN-12-1163  
OAH DOCKET NO. 2500-31196

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1 MS. TRACY SMETANA: Good evening everyone  
2 and thank you for coming.

3 My name is Tracy Smetana, I'm with the  
4 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and we're  
5 here to talk about two different aspects for the  
6 Great Northern Transmission Line Project that  
7 Minnesota Power is proposing.

8 The first piece is public information,  
9 that's the part I'm going to take care of. Then  
10 we'll move into what we call scoping, and Bill  
11 Storm, who you met on the way in from the Department  
12 of Commerce will take you through that process.

13 So I'll go ahead with the introductions,  
14 talk a little bit about who is the Public Utilities  
15 Commission, who are the other players in this  
16 process, how does it work. I will ask Minnesota  
17 Power to give us a brief summary of their proposed  
18 project, and then the Department of Commerce,  
19 Mr. Storm, will talk about the environmental review  
20 process. And finally we'll get to the good stuff,  
21 that's your comments and questions.

22 So who is the Public Utilities  
23 Commission? I always like to start off with a  
24 little introduction of who we are and what we do.  
25 We regulate permitting for power plants, pipelines,

1 transmission lines. We also deal with local and  
2 in-state long-distance telephone companies and the  
3 rates and services for investor-owned electric and  
4 natural gas utility companies.

5 We have five Commissioners appointed by  
6 the governor, and they serve staggered terms, so  
7 they don't all come in, you know, a brand new batch  
8 when we get a brand new governor. We have some that  
9 have been appointed by Governor Dayton and some that  
10 have been appointed by previous governors as well.

11 It's also full-time employment. A lot of  
12 times people will say, oh, do they just show up on  
13 meeting days and make those decisions? Nope,  
14 they're there full time, 40 hours a week, just like  
15 the rest of us. And there are about 50 of us on  
16 staff at the Commission that help with various  
17 aspects of building the record and helping the  
18 Commission make decisions.

19 Some other people that you might interact  
20 with through this process. First off, the  
21 applicant. That's the term we use for the company  
22 asking for the certificate of need. So in this case  
23 that's Minnesota Power. So if you hear someone  
24 refer to the applicant, that's who they're talking  
25 about.

1                   We also have two different parts of the  
2           Department of Commerce that play a part in this  
3           process. The first is the Energy Environmental  
4           Review and Analysis group, you might see that  
5           abbreviated as EERA. You met Bill on the way in,  
6           he'll talk to you more about what their role is in  
7           the process.

8                   The other arm of Commerce that assists us  
9           is the Regulation and Planning division. They have  
10          some analysts that deal with financial aspects and  
11          those types of things.

12                  Later on in the process we'll ask the  
13          Office of Administrative Hearings to participate as  
14          well. They'll assign an administrative law judge,  
15          you might see that abbreviated as ALJ. They'll come  
16          out and hold hearings here to collect evidence for  
17          the record and to ultimately write a report for the  
18          Public Utilities Commission to assist in its  
19          decision-making.

20                  In addition, there's two different folks  
21          that you might work with at the Public Utilities  
22          Commission. The first is the public advisor, that's  
23          me. My job is to help you participate, to  
24          understand when it's time to chime in, when the  
25          comment periods are open, when meetings are coming

1 up, what type of questions we're looking for answers  
2 to, that type of thing. I'm neutral, I'm not going  
3 to represent somebody's position on a particular  
4 issue. I don't give legal advice and I'm not an  
5 advocate.

6 My counterpart at the Commission is a  
7 staff analyst who deals more on the technical  
8 aspects of the project, assists with building the  
9 record, collecting the facts and advising the  
10 Commissioners on the impacts of various decision  
11 options that are out there.

12 So in order to build a project like this  
13 the Minnesota statutes and rules give us some  
14 guidance on how that all works. And so the first  
15 thing that the company needs is what we call a  
16 certificate of need, and that's going to answer the  
17 question is the project needed. So that's the phase  
18 that we're dealing with tonight. I've included  
19 information about the statutes and rules that apply  
20 to this if you want to do a little bit more research  
21 and really dig your teeth in.

22 Now, the other piece of this puzzle is  
23 the route permit. So if we say, yep, it's needed,  
24 then we have to figure out where is it going to go.  
25 And that's the route permit part. And that also

1 requires a permit from the Public Utilities  
2 Commission. At this point the company has not yet  
3 asked for the route so we don't have information yet  
4 on where exactly they think it ought to go. But  
5 once they do file that, we'll have a process similar  
6 to this one where we come out and collect input from  
7 folks to figure out what those impacts are and so  
8 forth. And that will be, as I said, in a separate  
9 process from the need.

10 So how does the Public Utilities  
11 Commission decide on the need? Well, we have to  
12 answer some questions to figure that out. So, first  
13 off, what if the project isn't built? What would  
14 happen to things like adequate, reliable, and  
15 efficient service for Minnesota and neighboring  
16 states? Is there a better solution? We want to  
17 look at options for size, type, timing, cost,  
18 reliability and so on. So if there is a need, is  
19 this the best way to resolve it.

20 Does this project fix the problem while  
21 protecting the environment? We want to be concerned  
22 with things like wildlife, human health, other  
23 social and economic factors, kind of look at that  
24 whole picture.

25 We also want to make sure the project

1 meets other government requirements. There might be  
2 DNR requirements or Department of Transportation  
3 requirements that would have to be met for this  
4 project. And even though our office doesn't oversee  
5 those requirements, we certainly want to make sure  
6 the company is following those rules as well.

7 Okay. So if you like pictures, we're at  
8 the public information and scoping meetings right  
9 now. And so just before this step, the application  
10 was accepted. And I know that term is kind of  
11 confusing 'cause it sounds like, huh, if it's been  
12 accepted what are we doing here, isn't it a done  
13 deal? And the answer to that is no. What  
14 application accepted means is the company has  
15 submitted the information necessary to start the  
16 review process. So that's what sort of kicks it  
17 off. If we say, yep, we've got everything we need  
18 to move forward, application is accepted.

19 And then we'll move through the rest of  
20 these steps. And you can see that we'll be back for  
21 public hearings later on so you'll have another  
22 opportunity to weigh in on the question of need.  
23 The administrative law judge will conduct those.  
24 The judge will also conduct evidentiary hearings,  
25 which is really fact-finding, providing sworn



1 testimony, and that type of thing.

2 Ultimately, the judge will write a report  
3 that goes to the Public Utilities Commission and  
4 leads to the Commission's decision on this project,  
5 the question of need. In this particular case we  
6 anticipate that from that top box of application  
7 accepted to the final box of decision to take about  
8 15 to 18 months.

9 Here is the same information in a list  
10 form. If you're a list person you'll like this one  
11 better. So you can see the application was filed in  
12 October, accepted as complete in December. Here we  
13 are, February 2014, doing the public information and  
14 scoping meetings. And then the following steps  
15 leading down to the decision, which we're guessing  
16 is May 2015. Please note that it does say estimated  
17 project timeline. That's because as we move through  
18 a process like this lots of things can happen,  
19 things that could speed up the process, things that  
20 could slow down the process. So I just want to make  
21 sure that you understand that that is estimated.

22 Okay. So now you've gotten a little  
23 taste of what's happening here and you're thinking,  
24 huh, how can I learn more, I want to dig into this a  
25 little bit further, we have a few different ways

1           that you can get more information.

2                       The first is the Department of Commerce  
3 maintains a project website specific to the question  
4 of need on this project. They have a lot of  
5 information including a timeline that kind of ticks  
6 off the different steps in the process, along with  
7 links to documents that might be of interest.

8                       You also have the ability to see all  
9 documents that have been submitted in this project.  
10 The Public Utilities Commission has what we call an  
11 eDocket site. All of the information that gets  
12 submitted, so the application that the company filed  
13 to say, hey, we need this project, is in our eDocket  
14 system. And you can go in there and you can look at  
15 the information they submitted. If you submit  
16 comments, your comments go into that eDocket system  
17 as well so other folks can say, hey, what are people  
18 saying about this. So the steps are there to go  
19 ahead and search that eDocket system to find the  
20 information filed in this particular case.

21                      I did include what we call the docket  
22 numbers for both the need and the route. Even  
23 though the route hasn't been filed yet, we've  
24 assigned it a number. If you follow these steps now  
25 and search for that docket number, that second one

1 on there where it says 14 is the year and 21 is the  
2 number, you'll likely come up with empty search  
3 results because nothing has been filed in it yet.

4 We also have a project mailing list. I  
5 know a number of you filled out the orange cards on  
6 your way in. That's so you can stay informed on  
7 both the need and route questions for this project.  
8 When we have future meetings you will be notified of  
9 that. When there are opportunities for you to  
10 comment on questions that we're looking for help on,  
11 you'll get notice about that, and other milestones  
12 related to the project. If you don't fill out a  
13 card tonight and you think later, nuts, I should  
14 have done that, you can give me a call, drop me an  
15 e-mail, and we'll make sure to get you added to that  
16 list. And with that list you can be added either by  
17 e-mail or by U.S. mail.

18 If you want to make sure you receive  
19 everything that happens in this case we have an  
20 e-mail subscription service that you can sign up  
21 for. It does send you an e-mail every time  
22 something new comes in, so for some people that's  
23 e-mail overload, but if you like e-mail this could  
24 be the way to go. And you can just go ahead and  
25 sign up for that all on your own, you don't need my

1 help to do that.

2 The Department of Commerce has some  
3 additional information about the process for  
4 certificate of need and the route permit and some  
5 other useful information about the Energy Facilities  
6 projects.

7 The Minnesota statutes and rules are  
8 online at the Revisor's website, we talked a little  
9 bit about those earlier. And also on our website,  
10 we keep a calendar of information, meetings that are  
11 coming up, documents related to those meetings and  
12 so on.

13 And as I mentioned earlier, there are two  
14 different project contacts that you might be  
15 involved with at the PUC. The first is the public  
16 advisor, that's me. Again, my name is Tracy, my  
17 contact information is there. My counterpart, the  
18 staff analyst, Michael Kaluzniak, is not here this  
19 evening, but he would be happy to answer your  
20 questions if I'm not available, or if you have  
21 something of a more technical nature, that would  
22 probably be up his alley.

23 And with that I'm going to turn it over  
24 to Jim Atkinson with Minnesota Power.

25 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Thank you. Hi, I'm

1 Jim Atkinson, I'm the environmental siting and  
2 permitting manager for Minnesota Power.

3 I'm here to talk about the Great Northern  
4 Transmission Line and just give you some background  
5 on what it is that we're proposing and why. It's a  
6 500 kV AC circuit from Canada down to very close to  
7 here, about 10 miles east at our Blackberry  
8 Substation. And for a 500 kV line we need a 200  
9 foot wide right-of-way, and the structures are  
10 typically spaced between 1000 to about 1450 feet  
11 apart.

12 The line is designed for a capacity of  
13 about 750 megawatts, and of that 750 megawatts  
14 Minnesota Power is signed up, basically, for 383  
15 megawatts. We have a Power Purchase Agreement for  
16 250 megawatts that's already been approved by the  
17 Public Utilities Commission, and we have another  
18 agreement in place that's yet to be approved, but  
19 that's for another 133. Under the terms of those  
20 contracts with Manitoba Hydro we need to have this  
21 line in service by June 1st of 2020 in order to take  
22 that energy.

23 There's a couple big reasons why we're  
24 proposing it. And the first one is is we're trying  
25 to change the way we make electricity. Change the

1 bottom line equation, which is right now we make  
2 most of it by burning coal, about 75 percent of our  
3 energy comes from that. And with carbon legislation  
4 and other legislative changes either in place or in  
5 the works we see that as becoming much more  
6 expensive in the future. So diversification makes a  
7 lot of sense for us to mitigate rising costs.

8 At the same time we're trying to do that  
9 we're trying to actually increase how much  
10 electricity we are able to provide. And the main  
11 reason for that is the Iron Range taconite  
12 expansions that have been occurring. Magnetation,  
13 Essar, other expansions, UTAC, and so forth. And  
14 then we're also trying to account for the potential  
15 expansion that would come from nonferrous mining  
16 like Polymet and others.

17 These are just some structure types. The  
18 two on this slide are the ones we would use in  
19 forested or wetland areas and they're guyed  
20 structures. And these are the taller ones, they're  
21 up to 150 feet tall at the high end. And then this  
22 is the type of structure that we'd likely use in  
23 agricultural areas or areas that are more densely  
24 populated, that sort of thing.

25 And this is just some other ways to keep

1 track of the project. We have a website,  
2 greatnortherntransmissionline.com. We have a hot  
3 line. You have me, so if you want my card before  
4 you leave, feel free to ask for it and you can get  
5 ahold of me any time.

6 And I guess with that I'll turn it over  
7 to Bill who will run the main show here.

8 MR. BILL STORM: Good evening folks. My  
9 name is Bill Storm. I spoke to many of you as you  
10 came in. I'll sort of reiterate that little speech  
11 to you.

12 I work for the Department of Commerce.  
13 While the Public Utilities Commission is the  
14 ultimate decision-makers in these large energy  
15 projects, whether it be a need docket or a routing  
16 docket, the Department of Commerce's role is to  
17 conduct the environmental review. And the  
18 environmental review involves scoping, which is  
19 basically defining what will be in the document,  
20 preparation of the document, and release of the  
21 document to the public.

22 There are, as Tracy mentioned, when a  
23 public utility wants to build a large energy  
24 infrastructure project, whether it be a power plant  
25 or a transmission line or a pipeline, they need to

1 get two approvals from the Public Utilities  
2 Commission. The first approval is on the question  
3 of need. And the applicant would have to supply to  
4 the PUC, which Minnesota Power did, an application  
5 for a certificate of need. And that is the  
6 applicant's attempt to put their argument forward.  
7 We need the power, this is why we need the power,  
8 and we think the solution to getting that power is a  
9 transmission line.

10 The other process is the routing process.  
11 They are separate processes that go on. The routing  
12 process is where the Commission determines, should  
13 they grant the permit for the transmission line,  
14 they select a route, and then they put conditions on  
15 that route permit.

16 Both processes involve public information  
17 meetings that have a scoping aspect to them because  
18 I need to scope an environmental document. Both  
19 processes have their own environmental document.  
20 Both processes have a public hearing. We'll be back  
21 up here with an ALJ. And then both processes have  
22 the final decision by the Public Utilities  
23 Commission.

24 As I said when you were coming in  
25 tonight, what we are here to talk about is the need



1 question. Minnesota Power has not yet submitted a  
2 route permit to the PUC. While they've been up here  
3 probably for 18 months or so having public meetings  
4 trying to pick the best route when they're ready to  
5 come forward so you may have seen then before and  
6 been to other meetings.

7 So, as I said, the name of my unit is the  
8 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis Unit, we're  
9 inside the Department of Commerce. The rules state  
10 that through the CN process, certificate of need  
11 process, that the Department of Commerce must  
12 produce an environmental review document. In a need  
13 docket, that environmental review document is termed  
14 an environmental report. And the environmental  
15 report must contain information on the human and  
16 environmental impacts of the proposed project that  
17 are associated with size, type, timing, system  
18 configuration, and voltage of the project. So it's  
19 sort of looking at the human and environmental  
20 impacts through a narrow lens.

21 The rules state what has to be in my  
22 environmental report. So I'm not starting with a  
23 blank sheet, I'm starting with a framework that the  
24 rules provide for me. And just to go over some of  
25 these, the rules say that my environmental report

1 will need to have a description of the proposed  
2 project and associated facilities. I'll have to  
3 cover certain boilerplate alternatives to the  
4 project. Here the project proposal is a  
5 transmission line, the rules say I have to look at  
6 the environmental impacts of not only the proposed  
7 transmission line from a need standpoint, but I also  
8 have to look at what are the impacts of a no-build  
9 alternative, or the impacts of demand-side  
10 management, that's conservation, can we solve  
11 Minnesota Power's need by conservation. Purchased  
12 power, can they get the power from somebody else. A  
13 facility of a different size, upgrading existing  
14 facilities, can they upgrade the line they already  
15 have to meet their need. Can they meet the need  
16 through generation rather than a transmission  
17 project, and also the use of renewable energies  
18 inside this docket.

19 Other items or categories that I have to  
20 cover in the environmental report are an analysis of  
21 the human and environmental impacts of the proposed  
22 project and any alternatives that the public submits  
23 and gets approved by my commissioner for the scope  
24 of the environmental report, and I'll talk a little  
25 bit more about that later. I also have to look at

1 an analysis of the mitigation measures. The report  
2 will talk about what are the general impacts of  
3 these high transmission lines and what are some of  
4 the ways to mitigate them.

5 As Tracy alluded to, if they do get a  
6 certificate of need and they do get a route permit,  
7 before they can construct they need to get permits  
8 from other state agencies down the line, and my  
9 environmental report has to list them, as far as we  
10 know them. An example would be if they're going to  
11 cross the highway they're going to need a MnDOT  
12 permit. If they're going to go across a wetland or  
13 through public waters they're going to need a permit  
14 from the DNR. Those types of downstream permits.

15 The first part of environmental review is  
16 scoping. And what scoping is, as I said when you  
17 were coming in and I was at the table upfront,  
18 scoping is basically defining what is going to be in  
19 the environmental report, the table of contents, if  
20 you would. And what I'm soliciting from the public  
21 are two things. What impacts or issues do you want  
22 me to cover in my document to make sure I cover some  
23 issues that you feel are associated with  
24 transmission lines that you want to make sure I  
25 cover in the environmental document, and the other

1 is alternatives. If you have an alternative to the  
2 proposed project, the scoping process is an  
3 opportunity for you to put that forward to make it  
4 into the table of contents of the environmental  
5 report.

6 Now, if you want to put an issue, impact,  
7 or an alternative on the table, you need to do that  
8 tonight with the court reporter here officially as  
9 part of the record. Or you can submit a comment.  
10 The deadline is March 14th to submit a comment,  
11 either e-mail or snail mail it to me. And you need  
12 to identify the alternative or the impact that you  
13 want me to consider. You need to provide an  
14 explanation of why this alternative or impact should  
15 be in the environmental report, and then you need to  
16 supply any supporting information that you have that  
17 supports your position. Once the comment period  
18 closes and I get everybody's comment on issues or  
19 alternatives, I give the applicant an opportunity to  
20 comment on the comments.

21 Now, as I said, the PUC, the Public  
22 Utilities Commission, are the ultimate  
23 decision-makers in these dockets, whether it's a  
24 need or a route docket. And the Department of  
25 Commerce is the -- we do the environmental review.

1 And as part of that function, my commissioner, the  
2 commissioner of Department of Commerce, will come  
3 out with a scoping decision. After the comment  
4 period closes and I get everybody's comments and I  
5 give the applicant an opportunity to comment on the  
6 comments, I will then put together a recommendation  
7 to my commissioner on the scope of the environmental  
8 report. And basically you can think of the scope as  
9 the table of contents, what will be in the  
10 environmental report. Additionally, if the  
11 Commission comes forward with either alternatives or  
12 impacts that they want me to include, they're  
13 automatically included in the scope.

14 Okay. Let me -- if you remember, or  
15 maybe you grabbed one when you were up there, there  
16 was a little sheet that was on the table there that  
17 sort of explains environmental review inside a  
18 certificate of need docket. And as I said, what  
19 we're here to do is scope the environmental report.  
20 And what this little document that I put together  
21 shows you is not only what is environmental review,  
22 but also gives you a broad sense of what I think  
23 should be in the environmental report, broad  
24 categories. And as I said, I'm here to solicit what  
25 impacts do you want me to cover.

1                   To give you an example to help you think  
2                   about how can I put an impact on the table, if you  
3                   go to page 6 of that document you can see I have a  
4                   proposed table of contents for the environmental  
5                   report. And I have it in broad categories. And  
6                   what I'm asking the public to do is help me fill in  
7                   the subcategories in those categories.

8                   An example I'll give you is if you look  
9                   at item number 4, environmental effects, 4.5, health  
10                  and safety. Okay. Now, health and safety is a  
11                  pretty broad category and you may have a particular  
12                  concern, you may be concerned about EMF, electric  
13                  and magnetic fields, so that's what I want to hear  
14                  from you. Bill, I'm concerned about EMF, I've read  
15                  some things about it or I heard something in news  
16                  stories, I want to make sure you discuss it in the  
17                  environmental document. That's what I'm asking you  
18                  to do tonight and during the comment period, is come  
19                  forth with those impacts that you want to make sure  
20                  I cover.

21                  So that covers impacts. And impacts are  
22                  a little easier, under health and safety you might  
23                  also think stray voltage or induced current, things  
24                  like that. So if you have a particular impact or  
25                  concern that you want to make sure I address, help

1 me fill in these broad categories.

2 The next item is a little trickier inside  
3 a need docket. As I said, we do both, the  
4 environmental review for both need dockets and  
5 routing dockets. And they both have the same  
6 scoping function where I'm asking for impacts and  
7 alternatives. And in the routing, when I'm up here  
8 in May and I'm doing this in preparation for my  
9 environmental impact statement for routing, when I  
10 get to the section of alternatives, that's a little  
11 easier for the public to grasp because it's  
12 tangible. Minnesota Power has drawn a line on the  
13 map, it goes through some feature that I have an  
14 interest in, I want you to go around that feature.  
15 That's an alternative, Bill, go around that feature.  
16 That's easy and tangible for somebody to get. When  
17 we're in a need docket we're looking at issues  
18 associated with size, type, timing, system  
19 configuration, and voltage. That can be a little  
20 harder for the public to wrap their heads around.

21 So as an example, when I showed you,  
22 again, page 6 of that draft environmental report,  
23 you can see there's a section 3, which is  
24 alternatives to the project. And you see some of  
25 those alternatives are the ones I went through in

1       that table that are boilerplate, that the rules say  
2       I have to have. But if you look at 3.6, facilities  
3       of a different size. Again, this is a broad  
4       category, and what I'm asking you is you help me  
5       fill in the details of that category. And you may  
6       think, you know, Bill, they're asking for a 500 kV  
7       line, will that be obsolete in 30 years? Maybe they  
8       should build a 765 kV line, so I want you to look at  
9       the impacts of a 765 kV line relative to a 500 kV  
10      line. Or your position may be, oh, I think they're  
11      asking for too much, I think they can get by with a  
12      230 kV line, so I want you to look at the impacts of  
13      a 230 kV line instead of a 500 kV line.

14               So that's what I'm looking for when I  
15      talk about give me suggestions for alternatives  
16      inside a need docket. It's a lot less tangible than  
17      when we do the routing. When I'm up here in May or  
18      June or whenever I come up here for the routing  
19      scoping, I'm sure it's much more tangible, there  
20      will be a lot of alternative route segments or  
21      alignment adjustments that people want to make that  
22      are more tangible and intrinsic.

23               So that's basically the two things I'm  
24      looking for. Give me some input on the issues you  
25      want to see me cover, give me some input on what



1 alternatives you might want me to cover. And, also,  
2 you can take the opportunity in a second when I turn  
3 it over to you to ask questions of me, the  
4 applicant, or the Commission staff. You can, as I  
5 said, put impacts and alternatives on the table, or  
6 you can just vent, if you need to, if you feel the  
7 need to vent.

8 Remember that your comments need to be to  
9 me, either snail mail or e-mailed to me by  
10 March 14th to be considered in the scoping document.

11 And that's what I have. What I'll do is  
12 I normally have cards for people to fill out and I  
13 call from the cards for people who want to speak,  
14 but I'm just going to do a show of hands because the  
15 crowds have been kind of light on this two-week tour  
16 we've been doing.

17 So if you want to speak, I'm going to ask  
18 you to raise your hand, I'll call on you, I'll ask  
19 you to step up to the mic, state and spell your  
20 name, and then ask your question, give your issue or  
21 alternative, or your comment. I ask that you try to  
22 talk slower than I do because I raced through it.  
23 The court reporter will be taking your information  
24 down, this will become part of the record that will  
25 be carried through the process through the ALJ and

1 ultimately in front of the Commission.

2 So let me see if I can turn this on now.

3 Okay. Is there anybody who would like to  
4 speak on the record tonight?

5 Okay, sir, if you wouldn't mind stepping  
6 to the mic, state and spell your last name, and then  
7 ask your question and give your input.

8 MR. ERIC BOGREN: Okay. Eric Bogren, and  
9 I would like to --

10 MR. BILL STORM: Spell your name, please.

11 MR. ERIC BOGREN: E-R-I-C, B-O-G-R-E-N.  
12 And I'm a landowner in Trout Lake Township, with the  
13 transmission line through my 40. And I would rather  
14 speak to the audience so I'm going to turn this.

15 I propose that the Public Utilities  
16 Commission should consider a corridor that would  
17 include not just the present line, but future lines  
18 coming down from Manitoba. Manitoba has huge  
19 capacity for hydroelectric power. It's green power,  
20 it's good, we want it for the future. But what I  
21 don't want to see is every time they want to bring a  
22 new line down you go through the whole process  
23 again.

24 There is a line coming down right now, if  
25 I have it right, outside of Chisholm, it crosses the

1 Range, and that's from Manitoba. No where in the  
2 meetings up to this point did I see a serious  
3 consideration of paralleling that line. Every time  
4 I raise it with Minnesota Power representatives they  
5 say for safety we separate. I say I've been up in  
6 northern Canada, I've seen four power lines coming  
7 down parallel for hundreds of miles from the Peace  
8 River Dam. I don't think the Canadian engineers are  
9 less smart than the U.S. engineers.

10 I also see, when I go to the Cities, that  
11 where land values are very high and safety is a  
12 serious consideration, Minnesota Power builds  
13 stronger power poles, towers, and strings more lines  
14 on those towers. So it isn't just safety to  
15 separate, it's also economics.

16 Now, as a landowner with a transmission  
17 line coming through, every time there's a question  
18 about a transmission line I have to get involved  
19 because I don't know if it's coming through my  
20 property. The reason I would like to see a corridor  
21 designated for maybe the next line after this one,  
22 or the next line after that, is that landowners  
23 don't have to go through that process each time.  
24 And when the consideration comes up that a new power  
25 line is coming through your property, you would know

1           whether or not there might be a second one and a  
2           third one coming through as well. And that can help  
3           you in your decision as to whether or not you're  
4           going to sell your property and move or go through  
5           the process that I go through each time.

6                       That's my comment.

7                       MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

8                       Next? Anyone else? Does anyone else  
9           want to speak onto the record? Show of hands.

10                      You, Darrell, would you please step up to  
11           the mic, state and spell your name, and make your  
12           comment.

13                      MR. DARRELL WHITE: Darrell,  
14           D-A-R-R-E-L-L, W-H-I-T-E. Trout Lake. I got a long  
15           story. I retired in '97. Came up here --

16                      UNIDENTIFIED: We can't hear.

17                      MR. BILL STORM: Darrell, can you pull  
18           the mic up, speak a little closer to it?

19                      MR. DARRELL WHITE: I came up to my  
20           wife's property, built a house. We have a gas line  
21           running through our property. Excelsior was going  
22           to come through our property with a pipeline and a  
23           high tension line. Did they go down?

24                      MR. BILL STORM: Darrell, the Excelsior  
25           Mesaba project did get their permits, but they have

1 not built or construct or moved forward.

2 MR. DARRELL WHITE: I lost where I was.  
3 Nashwauk was going to come through with a pipeline  
4 and high tension line. That -- I can't think of  
5 their name, the Indian company out of -- Essar.  
6 They were going to come through. And now this. I'm  
7 going to end up owning property and, like you said  
8 earlier, I'm in a fatigued area.

9 MR. BILL STORM: The term we're hearing  
10 is corridor fatigue.

11 MR. DARRELL WHITE: Yeah. When will this  
12 end? I've been trying to sell my property by mouth.  
13 As soon as I tell them a high tension power line is  
14 coming through they don't want nothing to do with  
15 it. And I called the power company that's putting  
16 it through and I talked to this gentleman right  
17 here, and he said I'd get used to it, the high  
18 tension lines. And I held my breath, without saying  
19 certain words I called him silly three times. So I  
20 don't know what's going on. But I asked him would  
21 he live under it? No answer. So he expects other  
22 people to live under it? This is an  
23 environmentalist.

24 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Darrell.

25 Okay. A show of hands? Anybody else

1 want to speak onto the record? Comment, issue,  
2 alternative, rant?

3 Okay. Sir, would you please step up to  
4 the mic, state and spell your last name?

5 MR. RICHARD LIBBEY: It's Richard Libbey,  
6 R-I-C-H-A-R-D, L-I-B-B-E-Y. Grand Rapids,  
7 Minnesota.

8 I wasn't really planning on speaking  
9 tonight, this might be more related to the line  
10 itself. But I guess as part of the environmental  
11 review I'd like to see that you do a comparison  
12 between following existing corridors compared to  
13 going across country because of the impacts, of  
14 course, fragmentation. And I'd also like you to  
15 consider alternatives of avoiding the lakes in the  
16 area.

17 I've been to the other meetings and asked  
18 for information on where the existing power lines  
19 are. Because if you go to their website they don't  
20 have the existing power lines, except if you zoom in  
21 very close up you'll see them, but there's no  
22 overall power line map. So they were gracious  
23 enough to send me the proposed route in relation to  
24 all the existing power lines in the system. And I  
25 requested they put that on their website so all the

1 people that are looking at the project got an idea  
2 if they were following existing corridors or not,  
3 but they said it would be confusing to the public  
4 because they wouldn't know what was existing and  
5 what wasn't, so they didn't put it on there. But  
6 I'd request as part of the information that you show  
7 the existing corridors and the proposed corridors.

8 And as far as alternatives of the  
9 project, I'm just wondering if you're going to look  
10 at the possibility of having solar installations in  
11 the area. And I guess, since I didn't want to talk,  
12 I'll have to do the rest of the thinking and send  
13 you an e-mail.

14 MR. BILL STORM: I appreciate that.  
15 Thank you.

16 Anyone else want to take the opportunity  
17 to speak on the record? Going once --

18 Sir, would you please step to the mic,  
19 state and spell your last name.

20 MR. CAVOUR JOHNSON: Cavour Johnson,  
21 C-A-V-O-U-R, Johnson is J-O-H-N-S-O-N.

22 Actually, Bill, one of the questions I  
23 had, when you brought up the EMF, is that something  
24 that is automatically going to be studied?

25 MR. BILL STORM: Yeah, EMF is always

1 included in my environmental reports.

2 MR. CAVOUR JOHNSON: Okay. I just wanted  
3 to be sure that it was.

4 And I guess one positive comment for  
5 Minnesota Power. I mean, I think that it's good  
6 that they are looking at nonfossil fuel sources of  
7 energy. And I guess they should be commended for  
8 that. I think a lot of the issues are routing and  
9 you're not really dealing with that right now. But,  
10 you know, I guess I'm glad to see that they are  
11 working towards something that will do less.  
12 Granted, we have to worry about the trees being  
13 taken down, but I think overall in the long-term  
14 effects it's a positive thing. I think we all wish  
15 there was a way it could be done without  
16 transmission lines, but it would be nice to look at  
17 all those alternatives.

18 But that's all I have to say.

19 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

20 Okay, sir. Step to the mic and state and  
21 spell your name, please.

22 MR. McQUAY: McQuay, M-C-Q-U-A-Y.

23 I just have a question on the fossil  
24 fuel. I'm originally from North Dakota, and I'm  
25 under the understanding North Dakota has a very



1 large legal fund that if Minnesota Power or  
2 Minnesota companies would cut back on the coal, that  
3 they would sue and the consumption has to remain the  
4 same.

5 I believe everybody here is going to --  
6 this power line is detrimental, the people who will  
7 benefit by this won't know anything about the power  
8 line because everything remains the same and the  
9 status quo. The people who are going to carry the  
10 burden aren't going to benefit at all from this.  
11 And I believe the people that are going to benefit  
12 will not reduce the fossil fuel at all. I believe  
13 the fossil fuel, the coal trains in the Dakotas will  
14 be coming through Minnesota as equal as they are  
15 today. And it would be a lot easier to swallow.

16 I have two houses for sale, as the  
17 earlier speaker says, you can't sell them. I got  
18 two for sale and I own them and I have no idea what  
19 to do with them. And to tell me it's  
20 environmentally really good to do this, I don't  
21 believe that, because I don't believe anybody is  
22 cutting back on consumption, I don't believe the  
23 consumption of coal and fossil fuels will be cut  
24 back either.

25 Thank you.

1 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

2 Okay. Once again, anybody want to speak  
3 to the record?

4 Okay, sir. Please step forward and state  
5 and spell your name for the court reporter.

6 MR. DONALD SIMONS: Donald, last name,  
7 S-I-M-O-N-S.

8 I have two questions for the Minnesota  
9 Power man. How are you going to distribute that  
10 much current after it gets to the Blackberry Sub?  
11 What are you going to do with it? Is there more  
12 lines coming to distribute that?

13 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Currently there's no  
14 plans for additional lines. The 750 megawatts can  
15 be distributed once it gets to Blackberry on our  
16 existing 230 kV system.

17 MR. DONALD SIMONS: Will this eventually  
18 shut down one of your coal-fired plants?

19 MR. JIM ATKINSON: We are converting one  
20 of our coal-fired plants right now, we're underway  
21 in the permitting for that, from coal to gas. It's  
22 not eliminating the plant, but it is going to be  
23 repowered with natural gas instead. There are other  
24 units that we're considering either converting or  
25 shutting down.

1 MR. DONALD SIMONS: All right. Thank  
2 you.

3 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

4 Okay. Anyone else who would like to take  
5 this opportunity to speak on the record? Going  
6 once.

7 Okay, sir, please step to the mic and  
8 state and spell your name.

9 MR. RICHARD LIBBEY: Richard Libbey,  
10 L-I-B-B-E-Y, again.

11 And I just wanted to speak to the part of  
12 need. I think it's a pretty amorphous thing right  
13 now, because of the nonferrous metal situation.  
14 Polymet has now proposed that they'll violate the  
15 water quality standards if they shut down with the  
16 current design, but what their plan is is to build a  
17 water treatment plant, that they'll operate for 200  
18 to 500 years. Because of that I'm not sure this  
19 will be permitted, so that's probably 200 megawatts  
20 of power. So I'm just wondering if the need is  
21 really there for this.

22 There's also the stage two of this will  
23 be a line to Duluth. Is that all going to be  
24 pass-through power? Do we just consider -- we have  
25 to decide if there's that much need in this area and

1           how sure you can be about the projections of the  
2           power demand in the future.

3                       MR. BILL STORM:   Okay.   Thank you.

4                       Sir, please step to the mic and state and  
5           spell your name.

6                       MR. KURT CHRISTOPHERSON:   Kurt, K-U-R-T,  
7           Christopherson, C-H-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E-R-S-O-N.

8                       And I guess I came tonight to -- and  
9           after Darrell spoke I was not going to -- I was  
10          just going to sit there quietly, and then I heard  
11          Bill mention corridor fatigue.

12                      And I just want to bring out an  
13          interesting point, I have a little bit of conspiracy  
14          theory in my mind, and kind of thinking about it,  
15          looking at the parallels of this line may go in  
16          operation by about 2020. And for Minnesota Power,  
17          for Jim here, who one of his former compadres who  
18          worked at Minnesota Power, maybe before Jim's time,  
19          Tom Micheletti, Excelsior Energy Project, I find it  
20          interesting, the corridor for that boondoggle runs  
21          very similar to this one.

22                      And then the gentleman brought up the  
23          point about Blackberry Substation. And when I was  
24          sitting in the Excelsior project, keep in mind that  
25          they kept talking about once they get the power to

1 the Blackberry Substation, then they'd have to build  
2 another power line to the Twin Cities to take  
3 advantage of their clean coal technology, which we  
4 all know the boondoggle Excelsior was.

5 So I just want to get here on the record,  
6 and I have a sneaking hunch that being the siting  
7 for Excelsior has already been permitted -- how far  
8 have they gotten, Bill.

9 MR. BILL STORM: They've been granted a  
10 permit.

11 MR. KURT CHRISTOPHERSON: Correct. The  
12 odds of Tom Micheletti somehow finagling the sale to  
13 Minnesota Power and making this all work just seems  
14 like it all gels way too well together. And being  
15 he used to be involved in the legal department at  
16 Minnesota Power many years ago, would come back to  
17 my little theory that the Range sticks together.

18 So thank you.

19 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

20 Once again, I encourage you to speak.  
21 Does anybody additional want to speak on the record?  
22 Going once. Going twice.

23 Okay. Remember, as you think about this  
24 and as we move through the weeks here, you have  
25 until March 14th to submit your comments to me.

1 E-mail, snail mail, fax, too, I guess, if you would  
2 want to use it that way, if anybody still uses  
3 faxes.

4 I thank you for coming out. The point of  
5 the process is to get input from the public to help  
6 me make as complete an environmental document as I  
7 can and to make the record as complete as we can.

8 Again, I thank you. If you have any  
9 questions going forward, you have my information,  
10 you can certainly give me a call any time and I can  
11 try to assist you.

12 Well, have a safe drive home, folks, and  
13 thank you very much.

14 (Meeting concluded at 6:56 p.m.)  
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